

## SOME PATTERNS OF VARIABILITY IN THE USE OF DIMINUTIVE AND AUGMENTATIVE SUFFIXES IN SPOKEN MODERN GREEK KOINE (MGK)

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The following study of diminutive and augmentative suffixation in Modern Greek Koine is based on a variationist model of analysis. As such, it allows contextual meaning to permeate all statements of form. Furthermore, it purports to reveal the interplay between the distributional and the probabilistic properties of the relevant exponents of grammatical values. Thirdly, it seeks to establish the contents of competence through the analysis of use. Lastly, it combines both synchronic and diachronic considerations in that it attempts to show how variation through time is invested with and sustained by present-time social functionality.

### 1. Introduction

The use of diminutive and augmentative suffixes in MGK is characteristic of (but not limited to) the more informal styles of the spoken language, though informal writing too often contains a fair amount of such suffixes. Diminutives and augmentatives are often used not (only) to express, respectively, «smallness» and «largeness», but, more importantly, to mark a high degree of familiarity between the participants in a situation. Thus, in a face-to-face interaction the speaker often uses diminutives to call upon the familiarity (purported to be) characteristic of the relations between the interlocutors and/or to speak endearingly, and sometimes (mock-) disparagingly about participants or other elements of the situation; as for augmentatives, they express admiration or disdain on the part of the speaker for such qualities of the referent of the relevant noun as largeness, power, striking beauty, sex appeal or high performance, and tend to raise the degree of familiarity of the situation, often to the point of rowdiness.

In the article that follows we will attempt to isolate, on the basis of a variationist model of analysis, some patterns of the co-occurrence of diminutive and augmentative suffixes on the one hand and elements of the linguistic and extra-linguistic environment on the other.

1.1. Suffixation, i.e. the addition of bound forms to the right-hand boundaries of stems, is perhaps the most usual (but certainly not the only: see below) means MGK possesses for the expression of diminution and augmentation. It affects mainly nouns:

|        |        |   |          |          |                 |
|--------|--------|---|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Πέτρος | pétros | > | Πετράκης | petrákis | «little Peter»  |
| μάνα   | mána   | > | μανούλα  | manúla   | «little mother» |

σκύλος skilos > σκυλάκι skiláki «little dog»  
 μηχανή mixani > μηχανάρα mixanára «high performance machine»

but also adjectives:

μικρός mikrós > μικρούτσικος mikrútsikos «endearingly small»  
 adverbs:

λίγο lígo > λιγάκι liyáki «a tiny little bit»

and verbs:

κλαίω kléο > κλαψουρίζω klapsurizo «I whimper»

However, the three latter parts of speech can take only diminutive, but not augmentative, suffixes, i.e. it appears that augmentative suffixation is limited to nouns only.<sup>1</sup> Diminution and augmentation can also be expressed

a) through the use of prefixes, i.e. bound forms added to the left-hand boundaries of stems:

μεγάλωσες megalóses «you have grown» >  
 παραμεγάλωσες paramegalóses «you have grown too much»

b) through the composition of free lexemes, with the diminutive/augmentative lexeme either preceding, e.g.

μικρέμπορος mikrémboros «retail merchant» <  
 μικρός «small» and έμπορος «merchant»,

or following the lexeme whose meaning is diminished/augmented, e.g.

ξινοφέρνει ksinoférni «it has a sourish taste» <  
 ξινός «sour» and φέρνω «bring, carry»,

c) through periphrastic (or analytic) constructions, e.g.

μικρό παιδί mikró pedi «small child»  
 Σαν να κατάλαβα san na katálava «(It's as if I have understood=)  
 I think I am beginning to understand»  
 Έλα λίγο éla lígo «come here a sec.»

and, finally,

d) through mixed constructions, i.e. combinations of periphrasis and either derivational or compositional formations, e.g.

1. See Μηνάς 1978, especially pp. 15-17, where augmentation in Greek is defined as a structural possibility open to nouns, i.e. adjectives, adverbs or verbs are nowhere discussed as potentially affected by augmentation. Our own (limited) data give us no grounds for doubting the above position.

μικρό σκυλάκι    mikró skiláki            «little doggie» <  
 μικρό «little» + skiláki            < σκύλος «dog» + diminutive suffix -áki

In this article we will concentrate on diminutive and augmentative suffixes of nouns, as our corpus (see 1.2. below) is rather poor on tokens of the other structural possibilities mentioned above for the expression of diminution or augmentation.<sup>2</sup>

1.2. The material on which this study was based was drawn from three tape recorded informal conversations, of six hours duration in all, between a total of fourteen young educated Athenian peers, seven male and seven female, of lower - to middle - middle class background, all of them friends of the writer, but at varying degrees of intimacy to him and to one another. The situation is held, by and large, constant in all three conversations, i.e. an informal gathering of friends at the writer's house with ample food and/or drink provided, though, as we shall see below, there are finer, yet important, differences between the elements of each conversation and between the three conversations, and these differences seem to correlate with differentiated linguistic behaviour.

The recording of the three conversations took place in the early 1970's, and was carried out discretely, yet, in the interests of academic ethics, not surreptitiously: indeed all the participants knew that their speech was being recorded. Furthermore, no effort was made on the part of the writer to elicit linguistic behaviour of any particular style or linguistic items of any particular form. It is therefore hoped that the language recorded is as close to natural, unobserved language as possible. However, methodological fastidiousness obliges us to observe that in each conversation «core» participants, to use Labov's terminology in a somewhat modified way,<sup>3</sup> i.e. those who have been on friendly terms with each other for years, seem to be unaffected by the presence of the recording equipment, if we judge by the amount of their linguistic production, whereas «peripheral» participants, i.e. those who are friendly with one core participant and a mere acquaintance to the others, produce very small amounts of speech. It is, therefore, fair to assume that the presence of a microphone, however unobtrusively tucked away on a book-shelf, does not exactly encourage uninhibited (linguistic) behaviour on the part of such participants.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, it should be appreciated that the recording of natural conversations is time-consuming and labour-intensive: thus, the linguistic behaviour of the core participants (but not the peripheral ones) was repeatedly recorded both in face-to-face interactions and on the phone over a period of two years, so that the novelty of their speech being committed to tape would wear off. Needless to say, they always knew that they were being recorded. The three conversations under consideration are the last to be recorded during that period and as such are presumed to be relatively free from the effects of inhibition.

1.3. In greater detail the following information concerning the context of situation in the three conversations seems to be of interest for the purposes of the present study.

2. For a detailed account of such formations see Μπαμπινιώτης 1969, 1970 and Μηνάς 1978.

3. See Labov 1972b, Ch. VII.

4. For a fuller discussion of the very interesting problems related to the recording of natural speech for the purposes of linguistic analysis see Daltas 1979, pp. 11-16, where the literature on the matter is reviewed, notably Labov 1972a and 1972b.

1.3.1. In the first conversation (*Conv. A*) there are two male participants, *Periklis*, the writer of this article, and *Vasilis*, and two female, *Eleni* and *Rubi*, all four core participants. There is also *Sula*, female, a peripheral participant, who is visiting the host's house for the first time. (As *Periklis* is the host in all three conversations, his participation in each of them will be indicated with the appropriate subscript: *Periklis*<sub>1,2</sub> or<sub>3</sub>). *Vasilis* and *Eleni* are fourth-year students of Greek at the University of Athens. *Rubi* is a musician, and her friend *Sula* is a graduate of a secretarial college. They are all in their early twenties, apart from the host who is thirty years of age. The only relationship holding the group together is that of friendship, i.e. there are no, say, family ties or business relations between any two members. *Conv. A* could be more accurately described as a competition in joke-cracking: the participants keep teasing each other and narrating (sometimes pitilessly) funny incidents involving members of their home, study or work environment. An important element in the situation is the fact that the participants are sitting at table in the writer's kitchen having a snack and washing it down with wine and ouzo.

1.3.2. In the second conversation (*Conv. B*) there are seven main participants, four male, *Periklis*<sub>2</sub>, *Sotiris*, *Sokratis* and *Vangelis*, and three female, *Nancy*, *Dolly* and *Mary*. *Sotiris* is married to *Nancy*, *Sokratis* to *Dolly* and *Vangelis* to *Mary*. *Vangelis* is *Dolly's* brother. *Periklis*<sub>2</sub> was best man at *Nancy's* and *Sotiris's* wedding and, according to Greek tradition, is the god-father of their three-year old son (see below). The four male participants are all thirty years old and, with *Dolly*, have been friends since childhood. *Vangelis* has finished high school and runs the family printing works. *Sokratis* and *Sotiris* are solicitors. The females are younger than the males by five to eight years. They became acquainted with each other and, with the exception of *Dolly*, with the males, through their husbands. They are thus relatively recent members of the group: not older than four to five years, as opposed to the twenty odd years of friendship in the case of the male participants. *Mary* is a graduate of a university school of economics, *Nancy* has finished a secretarial college, and *Dolly* has finished high-school. *Mary* is helping in the kitchen and therefore contributes very little to the conversation. *Vangelis* and *Periklis*<sub>2</sub> do not contribute very much either because they are often occupied with the setting of the table outside the range of the microphone. It should be noted that during the recording the participants are having drinks on the veranda but have not sat at table yet. In fact, after they sat at table the linguistic interaction became so lively and split into so many parallel conversations that it became undecodable.

Apart from the core participants there are also two children, *Ioana* (alias *Náva*, *Νάβακι* or *Ναβί*) the toddler daughter of *Dolly* and *Sokratis*, and *Dimitris* (alias *Δημητράκης*, *Μίμης* or *Μιμάκος*), the three-year old son of *Nancy* and *Sotiris*. The two children contribute very little linguistic production to the conversation, but, along with two dogs, turn out to be important participants in the situation, in that they often become the focus of attention and serve as addressees or as subjects of the conversation.

There is also *Mrs. Anna*, the writer's landlady, who tries to protect her vegetable garden against the two children and the two dogs. Her linguistic contribution is limited. Finally, a neighbour, *Mr. P*, can be heard occasionally talking to his own child in the garden next door.

Although there is occasionally some adult conversation on a number of topics (*Soti-*

ris' home region in the Peloponese, a funny incident during the elections involving *Sotiris* spending the night in a taxi that broke down on a deserted mountain road, financial difficulties, the relative merits of living in the suburbs or in the city, *Dolly's* objecting to *Sokratis's* wearing a suit and a tie on a fine spring day, etc.), the situation is really dominated by the children and, to a lesser degree, by the dogs. This is particularly true about *Dolly* and *Nancy*, who are hardly ever given the opportunity to talk to anybody else or about anything else but their children.

1.3.3. The third conversation (*Conv. C*) involves the core participants, *Yanis*, a lecturer in engineering in his late twenties, his brother *Marios*, a medical student in his mid-twenties, *Periklis*, the host, and a peripheral participant, *Tasia*, a secretary in her early twenties, who is *Marios's* current girl-friend.

Although here too there is the inevitable joke-cracking, teasing and even swearing, «serious» conversation dominates the situation. Some of the subjects covered are student unrest in the universities, bargain-hunting in the second-hand market of hi-fi and sound recording equipment, inflation and the then rumoured devaluation of the drachma, English language teaching and related certificates, and a friend's mother who is suffering from cancer. The participants are sitting in the sitting room having some wine but *Tasia* is having water only. As it is quite late at night, the writer's guests feel tired and decline the offer of food as they are having an early start the following morning.

1.3.4. In conclusion, it appears that, of the two conversations, *Conv. A* and *Conv. C*, the latter is the less informal (higher average age, no food, tired participants, relatively more «serious» topics) and the former is the more informal (lower average age, ample food and drink, care-free students, «light» conversation). *Conv. B* cannot be uniformly placed on the formality/informality continuum: the sections involving adults talking to each other can be considered to be of the same, more or less, degree of formality as *Conv. C* (friends meeting en famille, i.e. in their capacity as dignified spouses and parents); however, the sections involving parents, especially mothers, talking to their very young children seem to push the level of informality beyond that of *Conv. A*.

It remains now to be seen if a correlation can be established between features of the situation as described above and the appearance of diminutive / augmentative suffixes (section 3). Before that, however, we will examine (section 2) some formal (phonological, morphological, lexical and stylistic) aspects of the variable distribution of such suffixes.

## 2. Some formal properties of diminutive/augmentative (D/A) formation

2.1. *The structure of D/A suffixes.* In this section we will examine some phonological, morphological, stylistic, combinatorial and probabilistic aspects of the structure of the D/A suffixes encountered in our data.<sup>5</sup>

5. -άκα below does not in fact appear in the corpus but has been included in Table 1 to avoid an unwarranted structural gap. It should be noted, however, that the suffix is rather unproductive: Κουρμούλης 1967, cites only two instances, μαμάκα «dear mother» and γιαγιάκα «grannie». For statements covering a greater number of such suffixes in MGK see Μπαμπινιώτης 1970 (diminutives) and Μηνάς 1978 (augmentatives). See also Mirambel 1959, pp. 69-72, 311-9, Mackridge 1985, pp. 47-8, 158-60, Sotiropoulos 1972 and Tsitsopoulos 1973.

2.1.1. Below follows a table where such D/A suffixes, transcribed in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), are arranged with respect to gender and to internal structure.

TABLE 1: The D/A suffixes in the corpus arranged with respect to gender and internal structure.

| GENDER OF D/A SUFFIXES   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| MASCULINE  | FEMININE  | NEUTER  |
| Diminutives  |   |   |
| -ák + os<br>-ák + is<br>-ák + i + as → (ákjas)<br>-ík + os<br>-úl + is | -ák + a<br><br>-ík + a<br>-úl + a<br>-íts + a<br>-ul+íts+ a<br><br>-ó | $\overset{\circ}{\text{I}}+o (+n) (-jo)$<br>-áð+i + o (+n)<br>-át +i + o (+n)<br>$\overset{\circ}{\text{I}}$<br>-ið +i (+ o + (n))<br>-ak+i (+ o + (n))<br><br>-ík +i (+ o + (n))<br>-úl +i (+ o + (n))<br>-íts +i (+ o + (n))<br><br>-its +ák+i (+ o + (n))<br>-ul +ák + i (+ o + (n)) |
| Augmentatives  |   |   |
| -ar + os   | -ár + a<br>-a   |   |

Below follow examples from the corpus of the use of the above D/A suffixes.

*Diminutive suffixes*

**MASCULINE**

- ákis: Γιαννάκης janákis «Little Johnnie» < Γιάννης
- ákjas: κουλτουράκις kulturákjas «high-brow twit» < κουλτούρα «culture»
- ákos: Σπυράκος spirákos «Little Spyro» < Σπύρος
- íkos: πιτσιρικός pitsirikos «kiddie» (boy)
- úlis: Χριστούλης xristúlis «little Christ» < Χριστός

**FEMININE**

- áka: γιαγιάκα jajáka «grannie» < γιαγιά

- ika*: πιτσιρικά pitsirika «kiddie» (girl)  
 -*úla*: μανούλα manúla «little mother» < μάνα  
 -*ítsa*: καρεκλίτσα kareklítsa «little chair» < καρέκλα  
 -*ulítsa*: μανουλίτσα manulítsa «dear little mother/gorgeous girl» < μάνα  
 -*ó*: Λενιώ lenjó «dear little Eleni» < Ελένη

## NEUTER

- io(n)*: κιβώτιο κινότιο «small box» < κιβωτός «big chest, ark» (older form)  
 -*áðio(n)*: φυλλάδιο filáðio «leaflet» < φύλλο «leaf»  
 -*átio(n)*: δωμάτιο ðomátio «room» < δώμα «living quarters»  
 -*í*: τυρί tiri «cheese» < τυρός (older/formal equivalent)  
 -*íði*: δαχτυλίδι ðaxtiliði «ring» < δακτύλιος (older/formal equivalent)  
 -*áki*: γαϊδουράκι γαϊðuráki «little donkey» < γαϊδούρι «donkey»  
 -*iki*: πιτσιρίκι pitsiriki «kiddie» (boy or girl)  
 -*úli*: μανούλι manúli «(dear little mother =>) sexually desirable girl» < μάνα  
 -*ítsi*: κορίτσι korítsi «girl» < κόρη (older/formal equivalent)  
 -*itsáki*: κοριτσάκι korítsáki «little girl» < κορίτσι (see above)  
 -*uláki*: μανουλάκι manuláki (see -úli above)

## Augmentative suffixes

## MASCULINE

- aros*: Περικλαρος periklaros «big Periklis» < Περικλής

## FEMININE

- ára*: μηχανάρα mixanára «impressive machine» < μηχανή  
 -*a*: μπέκρα βέκρα «hopeless drunkard» < μπεκρής

2.1.2. In the list that follows the suffixes of Table 1 are arranged in order of frequency of occurrence in our data. For each suffix two figures are given: the number of tokens encountered in the corpus and the corresponding percentage of the total number of D/A nouns in the corpus.

|        |     |         |           |     |        |
|--------|-----|---------|-----------|-----|--------|
| ϕ      | 153 | (45.80) | -úlis     | 2   | (0.59) |
| -áki   | 77  | (23.05) | -úli      | 2   | (0.59) |
| -ákis  | 17  | (5.08)  | -o        | 2   | (0.59) |
| -úla   | 17  | (5.08)  | -ákjas    | 1   | (0.29) |
| ϕío(n) | 15  | (4.49)  | -ulítsa   | 1   | (0.29) |
| -ákos  | 10  | (2.99)  | -áðio     | 1   | (0.29) |
| -ítsa  | 8   | (2.39)  | -aros     | 1   | (0.29) |
| -ára   | 5   | (1.49)  |           |     |        |
| -a     | 5   | (1.49)  | Sum Total | 334 |        |
| -uláki | 4   | (1.19)  |           |     |        |
| -íði   | 4   | (1.19)  |           |     |        |
| -ítsi  | 4   | (1.19)  |           |     |        |
| -íkos  | 3   | (0.89)  |           |     |        |
| -iki   | 2   | (0.59)  |           |     |        |

The above list seems to be at variance, at least partly, with other counts in the literature. Both Mackridge (1985), and Babiniotis (1970), consider the suffixes, -áki, -úla, and itsa, in that order, as the most frequent D suffixes of MGK. Mackridge bases his ordering «on a large amount of spoken and written material collected systematically since 1974» (p.vi) but does not give precise frequencies, whereas Babiniotis uses a productivity criterion and counts the number of examples with which the above suffixes are represented in Kourmoulis (1967). It should be noted that the ordering of the above «top three» suffixes is the same in all three studies, though in the present study an additional four suffixes appear in between. The explanation is two-fold.

Firstly, in this count are included the numerous instances of, largely, fossilised, diminutives in  $\mathfrak{F}$  and  $\mathfrak{F}(\text{n})$  as well as some surnames in -ákis so that we can examine the intertwinning of synchrony and diachrony in the D/A system (see 2.2.6. below).

Secondly, the high incidence of -ákis and -ákos in our data (where, incidentally, the latter precedes, whereas in Babiniotis follows, -itsa) is a result of the unavoidably high incidence of the petnames of some of the participants in the conversations: Janakis, Periklakis, Sotirakis, Spirakos, Mimakos, etc.

2.1.2. An inspection of TABLE 1 above shows that D/A suffixes can be divided into simple ( $\mathfrak{F}$ , -ó and -a, also  $\mathfrak{F}(\text{n})$ ) (but see below), and complex, the latter made up of an ending preceded by one or more infixes.

2.1.3. The simple D/A suffixes are either feminine (-ó, -a) or neuter ( $\mathfrak{F}$ ,  $\mathfrak{F}(\text{n})$ ). Of them only -a fulfils a wider function outside the A system in that it is one of the most frequent and widely distributed feminine endings in MGK, e.g. *θάλασσα* «sea», *ωραία ημέρα* «beautiful day». Nevertheless, -a is one of the oldest and most important A suffixes<sup>6</sup> forming feminine augmentatives stressed on the penultimate, mainly from diminutive neuters:

*μαχαίρα* *maçera* «big knife» < *μαχαίρι* *maçeri* (fossilised diminutive) «knife» < original *μάχαρα* *máçera* «knife»

but also from other categories of nouns:

*μπέκρα* *békra* «hopeless drunkard» < *μπρεκρός* (masc.) «drunkard»  
*μαζόχα* *mazócha* «hopeless masochist» < *μαζοχιστής* (masc.) or *μαζοχίστρια* (fem.) «masochist».

The D suffix -ó, on the other hand, can be added to the stem of only a few feminine first names:

*Λενιώ* *lenjó* «dear Eleni»  
*Μαριώ* *marjó* «dear Maria»

As for  $\mathfrak{F}$ , it functions as a neuter ending outside the diminutive system, but also serves to form a great number of, mainly fossilised, diminutives deriving from older/formal non-diminuted lexemes:

6. See Μηνάς 1978, pp. 38-48.



|       |      |         |                |
|-------|------|---------|----------------|
| χέρι  | çeri | «hand»  | < χειρ (fem.)  |
| παιδί | peði | «child» | < παις (masc.) |
| γυαλί | jali | «glass» | < ύαλος (fem.) |

Although deriving, historically speaking, from  $\text{-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{on}}$ ,  $\text{-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{i}}$  has gained independence from  $\text{-on}$  in the case of such diminutives of the informal language as the above – to which, however,  $\text{-on}$  can still be added to make up rare, ad hoc and stylistically marked forms (see below).

The suffix  $\text{-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{on}}$ , which also serves to form, mainly fossilised, diminutives, though originally simple, can now be considered as complex in that  $\text{-o}$  and  $\text{-n}$  are distributed (partly) independently from  $\text{-i}$ . Indeed, subject to Stylistic Co-occurrence Restrictions (SCR)<sup>7</sup> whose contrastive values are  $\{\pm K(\text{atharevousa})\}$ ,  $\text{-n}$  is a marker of  $\{+K\}$  and co-occurs with other  $\{+K\}$  (or simply  $\{+\text{learned}\}$ ) linguistic forms (outside the diminutive system too) to contrast with  $\{-K\}$  formations. As for the formative  $\text{-o}$ , it appears categorically in the presence of certain infixes and/or lexemes which can be classified as  $\{+\text{learned}\}$ :

|          |   |           |
|----------|---|-----------|
| φυλλάδιο | fil + á $\overset{\text{f}}{\text{d}}$ + io | «booklet» |
| δωμάτιο  | $\overset{\text{f}}{\text{d}}$ om + át + io | «room»    |
| βιβλίο   | vivl + io                                   | «book»    |

i.e.  $\text{-o}$  is a  $\{+\text{learned}\}$  formative, but variably (indeed, very rarely but the structural possibility is always there) in the presence of  $\{-\text{learned}, -K\}$  infixes and/or lexemes:

|           |                 |          |
|-----------|-----------------|----------|
| πιτσιρίκι | pitsir + ik + i | «kiddie» |
| κορίτσι   | kor + íts + i   | «girl»   |
| μεσημέρι  | mesimér + i     | «noon»   |
| νινί      | nin + i         | «baby»   |

In the latter case  $\text{-o}$ , normally followed by  $\text{-n}$  to form a  $\{+\text{learned}, +K\}$  complex suffix, can be added on to such  $\{-\text{learned}, -K\}$  (complex) stems to make up in an ad hoc fashion what are felt to be incongruous or unexpected combinations in that they obey different SCR's, namely, respectively,  $\{+K\}$  and  $\{-K\}$ , for the purposes of stylistic effect, i.e. irony, joking, teasing, mock-pomposity and the like:  $\text{πιτσιρ-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{ik}}\text{-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{on}}$ ,  $\text{κορ-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{its}}\text{-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{on}}$ ,  $\text{μεσημέρ-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{on}}$ ,  $\text{νιν-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{on}}$ .

2.1.4. Complex suffixes are either masculine, feminine or neuter and are made up of an ending preceded by a single infix or a combination of infixes. The endings,  $\text{-is}$ ,  $\text{-os}$ , and  $\text{-as}$  for the masculine,  $\text{-a}$  for the feminine and  $\text{-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{i}}$  ( $\text{-}\overset{\text{f}}{\text{o}}$ ( $\text{n}$ )) for the neuter are not restricted to the D/A system but have a much wider distribution in the language. Of the infixes,  $\text{-ul}$ ,  $\text{-ik}$ , and  $\text{-ak}$  appear irrespective of gender and are both followed by (the only feminine D/A ending)  $\text{-a}$  or  $\text{-i}$ , whereas  $\text{-ul}$  selects masculine  $\text{-is}$ ,  $\text{-ik}$  selects  $\text{-os}$ , and  $\text{-ak}$  either  $\text{-is}$  or  $\text{-os}$ . To the neuter  $\text{-ák} + i$  masculine  $\text{-as}$  can be further added to form  $\text{-ák} + i + \text{as} \rightarrow \text{-ákjas}$  thus underlining further the unstable status of  $\text{-i}$  either as an ending in its own right or as a stem-final element which can be followed by suffixes. The remaining infixes are related to one or two genders only.  $\text{-ar}$ , an augmentative infix, is either masculine (followed by

7. See Daltas 1980, pp. 76ff, and for a more detailed formulation, Daltas 1979, pp. 539ff.

-os or -as) or feminine; -its- is either feminine or neuter, followed, in the latter case, by -i; -άδ-, -át- and -ιδ- are neuter followed by either -i- (normally) or -io(n) depending on the status of the lexeme involved with respect to the {± learned} contrast; finally, in our data zero infix (∅), as we have already shown at the beginning of this section, seems to be characteristic of neuter and augmentative feminine forms only: in fact, however, there are also masculine augmentatives without an infix between the stem and the ending, e.g.

|                  |              |       |        |
|------------------|--------------|-------|--------|
| μύτος mit + os   | «big-nose <  | μύτη  | «nose» |
| αφτιάς aftj + ás | «big-ears» < | αφτιά | «ears» |

2.1.5. It should be noted also that infixes can combine to produce an intensified D/A effect.<sup>8</sup> In our data -úl- can precede -its-, and -ák-, e.g.

|                |                     |                      |
|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| μαν-ουλ-ίτσ-α  | man + ul + its + a  | «dear little mother» |
| Χριστ-ουλ-άκ-ι | xrist + ul + ák + i | «dear little Christ» |

whereas -its- can precede -ák-:

|              |                    |               |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------|
| κορ-ίτσ-άκ-ι | kor + its + ák + i | «little girl» |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------|

Notwithstanding our limited data, we could venture the suggestion that the following hierarchy informs the combinatorial patterns of the above infixes (on a variable basis: see below):

-úl : -its- : -ák-

In fact, the relative order of the above infixes is conditioned by a number of other factors:

2.1.5.1. For one, the order -úl : -its- and -úl- : -ák- may be reversed depending on the degree of cohesion between the stem and the infix, i.e. if, as a result of a fossilisation process, -its- has lost, to a considerable extent, its D function and is now felt to be part of the stem, it can be followed by -úl-, e.g.

|               |                    |   |
|---------------|--------------------|---|
| καρφ-ίτσ-α    | karf + its + a     | «pin» (from καρφ-ί «nail») >                      |
| karfίts + a   | > karfίts + úl + a | «little pin»                                      |
| T-άκ-ης       | t + ák + is        | (pet abbreviation of the proper name Παναγιώτης > |
| Παναγιωτάκης) | > ták + is >       | tak + úl + is.                                    |

2.1.5.2. Another factor enhancing or obstructing the application of the above hierarchy in combination with the fossilisation process mentioned above is the «preferred» gender of the lexeme involved viz-a-viz the «preferred» gender of the infix (see below). For instance, κορ-ίτσ-ι kor + its + i «girl», is a largely fossilized neuter diminutive of feminine κόρ-η kór + i. The latter, though still retaining, but only marginally, the meaning of «girl», mainly expresses the meaning of «daughter». The former is normally diminuted (for as we said above, -its- has largely lost its D function) as, still neuter, korίts + ák + i and the latter as feminine kor + úl + a. In other words, the gender distinction (neuter/feminine) con-

8. See Mirambel 1959, p. 316 and Μπαμπινιώτης 1970, p. 202 et passim.

tributes to the semantic distinction between, respectively, *korits + i* and *kór + i*, and also keeps semantically apart their diminutive equivalents, respectively, *korits + ák + i* and *kor + úl + a*. Now there is no phonological reason why the form *korits-úl + i* could not exist alongside *korits + ák + i* (see paragraph above). However, statistically speaking, infixes seem to have a hierarchy of preferred gender: indeed, in our data *-úl-* appears seventeen times with feminine gender, twice with masculine (two different lexemes) and twice with neuter (two tokens of the same lexeme). It appears therefore that *-úl-* considerably favours the feminine gender over the other two and marginally prefers the masculine over the neuter:

*-úl-* : 1 > Feminine > Masculine > Neuter > 0

i.e. the probability of any one gender co-occurring with *-úl-* (to put it differently: the probability of any of the endings *-os* (masc), *-a-* (fem) or *-i* (neut) following the infix in question) is a number ranging between 1 (100% probability) and 0 (0% probability), and feminine has a higher probability than masculine which, in its turn, has a higher probability than neuter.

In other words *korits + i*, though in it the infix *-íts-* is largely fossilised, obeys the normal hierarchy of combinatorial preference: *korits + ák + i* and *korits + úl + a* is not (normally) influenced by the reversing effects of fossilisation (the way *karfits + úl + a* does) to yield *korits + úl + i* or preferably *korits + úl + a*. The reason seems to be, firstly, that *-íts-* is far less fossilised in *korits + i*, where traces of the element of diminution are still present, than in *karfits + a*, which has acquired a different meaning («pin») from that of its prototype *karf + i* («nail») and, therefore, the normal combinatorial hierarchy is still valid in the former case but is reversed in the latter; secondly, if, subject to the semi-fossilisation of *-íts-* in *korits + i*, the normal combinatorial hierarchy were reversed and *-úl-*, rather than *-ák-*, were suffixed to *-íts-*, the preferred gender of *-úl-* should be feminine (*korits + úl + a*) and not the neuter (*korits + úl + i*); but neuter gender, as opposed to feminine, helps to distinguish between the meanings of, respectively, «girl» (*koritsi*) and «daughter» (*kóri*); all in all then, the solution *korits + ák + i* is preferable to *korits + úl + a*.

2.1.5.3. Neuter affixes can be ordered too. Indeed *-ák-* may follow any of the other affixes, though, in the case of lexemes ending in  $\text{ḡ}(n)$  rather than *-i-*, *-ák-* is affixed to *-i-*:

|             |                   |                        |
|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| φυλλ-άδ-ι-ο | fil + áḡ + i + o  | fil + aḡ + i + ák + i  |
| δομ-άτ-ι-ο  | ḡom + át + i + o  | ḡom + at + i + ák + i  |
| νυμφ-ίδ-ι-ο | nymf + iḡ + i + o | nimf + iḡ + i + ák + i |

but

|             |                 |                      |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| πιτσιρ-ίκ-ι | pitsir + ík + i | pitsir + ik + ák + i |
| μαν-ούλ-ι   | man + úl + i    | man + ul + ák + i    |
| κορ-ίτσ-ι   | kor + íts + i   | kor + its + ák + i   |

The above constitutes further evidence that *-i-* vacillates, as we have already argued in the case of *-ák + i + a* → *ákjas*, between its status as a stem-final element and as an ending.

2.1.6. Table 1 also reveals the relative structural richness available to neuter D formations: three endings in a chinese box formation and seven infixes, as opposed to two

endings and four infixes for the feminine, and three endings and three infixes for the masculine. The structural richness is complemented by the probabilistic dominance of the neuter gender as an exponent of diminution: indeed 78.4 per cent of the diminutive tokens, often deriving from masculine or feminine prototypes, occurring in our data are neuter (see 2.1.2. above). Given also the fact that there are no augmentative neuter suffixes in the language, we can conclude that neuter is the dominant gender of diminution, though, of course, not the only one: feminine suffixes represent 11.4 per cent of the D/A tokens in our data followed closely by masculine with 10.2 per cent. Notice too that diminution is a far more frequent phenomenon in our data (323 tokens out of 334 D/A forms, or 96.7 per cent) compared to augmentation (11 tokens or 3.3 per cent). As we said above, augmentatives are either masculine or feminine but never neuter, (with the exception, perhaps, of neuter -iði. e.g. βρισίδι «lots of swearing»). The frequency of occurrence of A forms of the two genders, however, is very uneven: of the eleven A forms in the data ten are feminine (90.9 per cent) and one masculine (9.1 per cent).

We can therefore establish the following probabilistic relations concerning genders and the D/A systems:

$$1. \quad 1 > D > A > 0$$

i.e. the probability of a diminutive being used is higher than that of an augmentative.

$$2. \quad D: 1 > Neut > Fem > Masc > 0$$

i.e. the probability of a diminutive being of neuter gender is higher than that of being feminine and the probability of its being feminine is higher than that of being masculine.

$$3. \quad A: 1 > Fem > Masc > Neut = 0$$

i.e. the probability of an augmentative form being feminine is higher than that of being masculine, whereas the probability of its being neuter is zero.

## 2.2. The permitted combinations of stems and D/A suffixes

2.2.1. On the basis of the discussion so far it appears that three general tendencies (T) inform the permitted combinations of stems and D/A suffixes:

T 1 Any noun can be diminuted or augmented

T 2 Any noun, irrespective of its gender, can take a neuter diminutive suffix

T 3 Any noun, irrespective of its gender, can take a feminine augmentative suffix e.g.

|    |            |   |                          |
|----|------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1: | μάνα       | mána > man+úl+a                             | «little mother»          |
|    | αγωγή      | αγοji > αγογ+úl+a                           | «lovely little law suit» |
|    | πυρετός    | piretós > piret+úl+is                       | «little fever»           |
| 2: | άνθρωπος   | ánthropos (masc.) > anθrop+ák+i (neut.)     | «little man»             |
|    | Τασία      | tasía (fem.) > tas+ák+i (neut.)             | «dear Tasia»             |
|    | αυτοκίνητο | aftokínito (neut.) > aftokinit+ák+i (neut.) | «little car»             |
| 3: | άνθρωπος   | ánthropos (masc.) > anθrop+ár+a (fem.)      | «great big man»          |
|    | μηχανή     | míxani (fem.) > míxan+ár+a (fem.)           | «impressive machine»     |
|    | αυτοκίνητο | aftokínito (neut.) > aftokinit+ár+a (fem.)  | «lovely big car»         |

The above tendencies are, in fact, subject to the enhancing or obstructing effect of a number of constraints.

2.2.2. Concerning T1 above, an inspection of our data shows that nouns can be divided into two basic categories, {- learned} favouring and {+ learned} resisting the appearance of D/A suffixes. Indeed, almost all the diminuted nouns in our conversations serve simple, everyday needs, e.g.

*Forms referring to objects:* παιδάκι «little child», δοντάκι «little tooth», παιχνιδάκι «little toy», κατσικάκι «little goat», λουλουδάκι «little flower», πετσετούλα «little napkin», καρεκλίτσα «little chair», νεράκι «lovely water».

*Pet-names:* Μιμάκος «little Mímis», Νανί/Νανάκι «little Nána», Ντολίτσα «Dolly dear», Τασάκι «Tasia dear», Δημητράκης «little Dimitris», Ρουμπάκι «Rubi dear», Σουλάκι «Soula dear», Σπυράκος «Spyro dear», Γιαννάκης «Janis dear», Βασιλάκης «Vasilis dear», Σωτηράκης «Sotiris dear», Λενιώ «Eleni dear».

*Endearments to addressees:* a) of obvious reference: Χριστουλάκι μου! «my dear little Christ», κοριτσάκι μου! «my little girl», παιδάκι μου! «my little child», αγοράκι μου! «my little boy»,

b) metaphorical forms of address: καρδούλα μου! «my dear heart», μανούλα μου! «my dear little mother», αδερφάκι μου! «my dear little brother»,

c) with sexual connotations: μανούλι/μανουλίτσα/μανάκι/μανουλάκι/μανάρα μου «my dear little/smashingly attractive/big mother» (Could Freud have been right after all?).

*(Semi)-fossilised forms:* παιδί «child», κουτάλι «spoon», τηγάνι «frying pan», κρασί «wine», πόδι «foot», χέρι «hand», κεφάλι «head», αφτί «ear», μάτι «eye», δωμάτιο «room», δαχτυλίδι «ring», φυλλάδιο «leaflet», βιβλίο «book», κιβώτιο «box, container».

*Insults:* μπέκρα! «hopeless drunk», μαζόχα! «filthy masochist», σαδομαζόχα! «filthy sadomasochist», κουλτουράκια! «high-brow twit».

*Surnames:* Καζαντζάκης, Θεοδωράκης, Δασκαλάκης.

{- learned} nouns such as the above are not always diminuted or augmented, of course. In fact, of the 3,189 nouns appearing in our corpus only 334 (10.5 per cent) have D/A suffixes. And it is often the case in our corpus that the same noun appears sometimes with and sometimes without D/A suffixes: Δημήτρης/Δημητράκης «Dimitris», Ντόλυ/Ντολίτσα «Dolly», καρέκλα/καρεκλίτσα «chair», κόκορας/κοκοράκι «cockerel», δόντι/δοντάκι «tooth», σκύλος/σκυλί/σκυλάκι «dog», νερό/νεράκι «water» αβγό/αβγουλάκι «egg», μάνα μου!/μανούλα μου! «(dear little) mother», πυρετός/πυρετούλης «fever», παιδί/παιδάκι «child».

Of the diminutives or augmentatives in the corpus very few could be considered as deriving from {+ learned} originals: διαστηματάκι «a tiny length of time», διακοπτάκι «little switch» (notice the Katharevousa consonant cluster -/pt/- as opposed to the Demotic equivalent -/ft/-), φυλλάδιο «leaflet», πυρετούλης «little fever», μαζόχα «filthy masochist», σαδομαζόχα «filthy sadomasochist».

The rest of the {+ learned} lexemes in our data, i.e. those serving the «higher» needs of culture, science, technology, the administration and the like, remain unaffected by D/A suffixation: ανάμνηση «memory», σεμνότητα «modesty», θλίψη «sadness», πρόβλημα «problem», συνεννόηση «communication, understanding», σύστημα «system», ζημιά «damage», (ηλεκτρικό) σίδερο «electric iron», κασετόφωνο «cassette recorder», ήχος «sound», στρατηγός «general», γιατρός «doctor», σχολείο «school», κατασκήνωση «cam-

ping», συνοικέσιο «match-making», γάμος «wedding, marriage».

However, although {+ learned} lexemes resist D/A suffixation, they are still subject to it but the probability of such a lexeme being diminished or augmented is very low, even in very informal conversations. Indeed, diminutives such as γιατροδάκι and δικηγοράκι meaning, respectively, «young inexperienced doctor/lawyer» come readily to mind, and there is no structural impediment to forms such as κατασκηνωσούλα, κασετοφωνάκι, προβληματάκι, συνοικεσιάκι, στρατηγούλης or συστηματάκι. However, more abstract concepts such as σεμνότητα or θλίψη resist D/A suffixation<sup>9</sup> even more strongly than other {+ learned} categories of lexemes, and there are even phonaesthetic reasons why particular lexemes might not readily accept D/A suffixes: for instance, any attempt to diminish or augment γάμος «wedding, marriage» is undermined by connotations related to the «taboo» verb γαμώ «fuck».

Finally, T1 above is subject to the degree of formality of the situation (see 1.3.4. above): the more formal the situation the less likely it is for D/A formations to be used by the participants.

To conclude, T1 above is subject to the degree of formality of the situation (constraint *Formal* taking the values {± formal}), to the learnedness or otherwise of the vocabulary (constraint *Lnd* taking the values {± learned}) and to the further sub-categorisation of concepts as {± abstract} (constraint *Abstract*). Though not completely independent from each other (in a formal situation it is more likely, but by no means given, that more learned vocabulary and more abstract concepts will be used than in an informal situation) the above constraints could be ordered according to their relative weight or importance as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} T1: & 1 > Formal > Lnd > Abstract > 0 \\ \text{where } Formal: & 1 > \{-formal\} > \{+formal\} > 0 \\ Lnd: & 1 > \{-Lnd\} > \{+Lnd\} > 0 \\ Abstract: & 1 > \{-abstract\} > \{+abstract\} > 0 \end{aligned}$$

i.e. the probability of T1 applying (that is of a D/A form appearing) is affected by the constraints, in order of relative weight, *Formal*, *Lnd* and *Abstract*. The values of the above constraints which enhance T1 are the negative values whereas the positive ones push the probability of T1 applying almost down to zero.

2.2.3. Concerning T2 above, we have already shown (see 2.1.6. above) that its application accounts for 78.4 per cent of the cases where T1 has already applied, i.e. of the D forms produced by the application of T1 practically eight out of ten are neuter. It remains to examine more closely the conditions affecting, favourably or adversely, the application of T2.

2.2.3.1. To begin with, D forms seem to divide, roughly, into two categories, a) diminutives proper, i.e. those in which the string *stem + D suffix* does not constitute a separate lexeme but is effected in order to produce emotionally charged variants of their non-diminuted prototypes, and b) (largely) fossilised forms i.e. those in which the degree of cohesion of the string *stem + D suffix* is high enough to create the impression of new lex-

9. See Μπαμπινιώτης 1969, pp. 23-25.

emes so that now some have replaced their non-diminuted equivalents in common usage, e.g. (defunct) *τήγανον* «frying pan» and MGK *τηγάκι*, others contrast referentially with their pre-existing non-diminuted equivalents, e.g. *τραγωδία* «tragedy» and *τραγούδι* «song», and still others differ, on the synchronic level, from their prototypes in terms of formality, the diminuted forms (second of each pair in the examples below) being the informal ones, e.g. *τυρός* and *τυρί* «cheese», *χειρ* and *χέρι* «hand», *κεφαλή* and *κεφάλι* «head», *παις* and *παιδί* «child», *ους* and *αφτί* «ear», *όφις* and *φίδι* «snake», *πρωία* and *πρωί* «morning».

Now, an inspection of our data shows that almost all fossilised diminutives (174 forms or 97.75 per cent) are neuters in  $\text{-}\acute{\iota}\text{o(n)}$ ,  $\text{-}\acute{\iota}$ , or  $\text{-}\acute{\alpha}\text{ki}$  (though most diminutives in  $\text{-}\acute{\alpha}\text{ki}$  in our data are not fossilised) mainly deriving from masculine or feminine nouns. In fact, the only exception here is four masculine surnames (2.25 per cent) with (fossilised) D suffixes: *Καζαντζάκης* (two tokens), *Θεοδωράκης* and *Δασκαλάκης*. In contrast, within the category of diminutives proper (145 forms) masculines and feminines enjoy a much more prestigious representation with, respectively, 29 (20 per cent) and 28 (19.3 per cent) forms, in contrast to 88 neuter forms (60.7 per cent). But whereas all masculine and feminine D forms derive from, respectively, masculine and feminine prototypes, e.g. *Μίμης* > *Μιμάκος* (both masculine), *πετσέτα* > *πετσετούλα* (both feminine), of the 88 neuter diminutives 11 (12.5 per cent) derive from masculine prototypes, e.g. *διακόπτης* (masc.) > *διακοπτάκι* «switch», 18 (20.5 per cent) from feminines, e.g. *Τασία* (fem.) > *Τασάκι* «Tasia», 8 (9.1 per cent.) from both neuter and non-neuter synonyms, e.g. *κατσικάκι* «little goat» < *κατσικά* (fem.) or *κατσίκι* (neut.), *σκυλάκι* «puppy» < *σκύλος* (masc.) or *σκυλί* (neut.), and the remaining 51 (57.9 per cent.) from neuter prototypes, e.g. *δαχτυλάκι* «little finger» < *δάχτυλο* (neut.) (itself deriving from older/formal *δάκτυλος* (masc.)).

It appears, therefore that T2 above is variously affected by the two processes making use of D suffixes: firstly, the process of diminution proper relies on neuter suffixes for the formation of approximately sixty per cent of the diminutives proper, the remaining forty per cent being divided almost equally between the masculine and the feminine genders; secondly, the fossilization process whereby new leymes are created from forms whose diminutive character has been obscured, almost exclusively relies on neuter suffixes, which are, however, combined with prototypes of all three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter, in a ratio, respectively, of 1.25 : 2.05 : 5.79 (plus 0.91 for mixed cases, i.e. fossilised diminutives each corresponding to one neuter and one non-neuter prototype).

2.2.3.2. The dominance of the neuter gender in the two processes described above (almost total in the case of diminution proper, approximately sixty per cent in the case of the fossilization process) will be better appreciated if compared to the percentages of the three genders obtained from counts not limited to the D/A system. Mirambel<sup>10</sup> reports that in a list of 584 forms related to approximately two thousand words there are 240 neuter (41.1 per cent), 195 feminine (33.4 per cent) and 149 masculine (25.5 per cent) nouns. Mackridge<sup>11</sup> reports, in connection with the above figures, that «if one takes a

10. Op. cit., p. 73.

11. Op. cit., p. 52.

count in various texts the gap between feminine and neuter sometimes narrows, but the masculine always lags well behind».

Of our own corpus only *Conv C* yields the same relation between the three genders as that in the studies mentioned above. In the three conversations as a whole, though, 3,189 tokens, not lexemes, of nouns appear of which 799 (25.05 per cent) are masculine, 1267 (39.73 per cent) feminine and 1123 (35.21 per cent) neuter, i.e. the percentages for feminine and neuter are almost exactly the opposite of those corresponding to Mirambel's figures. The point, however, remains that the percentage of neuter nouns is considerably higher in counts of D/A forms than it is in counts of nouns irrespective of the D/A system.

2.2.3.3. The above presentation has not yet dealt with the problem why in our data a certain masculine or feminine lexeme preserves its gender when diminuted (i.e. selects a D suffix of the same gender) while another non-neuter lexeme becomes neuter upon diminution. (Notice, incidentally, that neuter prototypes always yield neuter diminutives and that masculine or feminine prototypes never yield diminutives of the opposite non-neuter gender).

Two main factors seem to emerge from our data. The one is related to the concept of markedness: masculine or feminine lexemes correspond to unmarked diminutives of the same gender but to marked neuter diminutives; cf. the proper names:

Τασία (fem.): Τασούλα (fem., unmarked): Τασάκι (neut. marked)  
 Ρούμπη (fem.): Ρουμπίτσα (fem., unmarked): Ρουμπάκι (neut. marked.)  
 Χριστός (masc.): Χριστούλης (masc., unmarked): Χριστουλάκι (neut. marked)

The other factor is related to the fossilization process discussed above. Indeed it seems that quite a few non-neuter lexemes correspond to two diminutives: a diminutive proper of the same gender and a fossilised neuter diminutive, e.g.

πετσέτα (fem.) «napkin»: πετσετούλα (fem., same meaning): πετσετάκι (neut.) «wine-glass mat»  
 μπάλα (fem.) «ball»: μπαλίτσα (fem., same meaning): μπαλάκι (neut.) «ping pong ball»  
 καρέκλα (fem.) «chair»: καρεκλίτσα (fem., same meaning): καρεκλάκι (neut.) «child's chair»

In conclusion, T2 above will have to be modified as follows:

T2: Neuter is the almost exclusive gender of fossilised diminution and the dominant gender of diminution proper. In the latter case it is the exclusive gender of diminutives deriving from neuter prototypes as well as of marked diminutives deriving from non-neuter prototypes.

2.2.4. In spite of the paucity of our data concerning augmentatives, we can tentatively suggest that T3 above is influenced by the combined effect of a number of factors, namely, the contrast {± animate} in correlation with grammatical gender and biological sex, as well as with a process of markedness.

To begin with, inanimates seem to select feminine A suffixes irrespective of the gender of the original, e.g.



μηχανή (fem.) > μηχανάρα (fem.) «big, powerful machine»,  
 κώλος (masc.) > κωλάρα (fem.) «fat arse»  
 δαχτυλίδι (neut.) > δαχτυλιδάρα (fem.) «great big ring»

Non-neuter animates, however, tend to stick to their original gender when augmented, e.g.

σκύλος (masc.) > σκύλαρος (masc.) «big dog»  
 μάνα (fem.) > μανάρα (fem.) «big mother = sexually attractive (buxom) girl»

and this tendency is particularly strong in the case of proper nouns, e.g.

Περικλής (masc.) > Περικλάρος (masc.)  
 Κατίνα (fem.) > Κατινάρα (fem.)

presumably because in their case grammatical gender corresponds to biological sex in a one-to-one relation (masculine to male and feminine to female), thus facilitating the selection of A suffixes of the appropriate gender. Masculine animates, however, with either male or female referents may well select a feminine A suffix if in a particular context their referent is female, e.g.

άνθρωπος (masc.) > ανθρωπάρα (fem.) «great big human being»

(said by a peasant woman to explain why, she, an «ανθρωπάρα» was not afraid of snakes). As for neuter animates, they select feminine A suffixes, e.g.

φίδι (neut.) > φιδάρα (fem.) «great big snake»,

unless their referent in a particular context is of male sex, e.g.

παιδί (neut.) «guy» > παιδάρος (masc.) «big/powerful/handsome guy».

Finally, a process of markedness is at play here too: animates with male or female referents may select the «unexpected» or marked gender when augmented, i.e. respectively, feminine or masculine, although they can also preserve the «expected» or unmarked gender, e.g.

κορίτσι (neut.) «girl» > κοριτσάρα (fem., unmarked): κορίτσαρος (masc., marked)  
 καθηγητής (masc.) «male teacher» > καθηγηταράς (masc., unmarked): καθηγητάρα (fem., marked)  
 μπεμπέκα (fem.) > μπεμπεκάρα (fem., unmarked): μπεμπέκαρος (masc., marked)  
 «great big baby doll»<sup>12</sup>

12. Used by my father in response to my surprise (at the age of ten) that a lady in her forties was addressed as μπεμπέκα by the members of her family. «Ναι, παιδί μου,» said my father, «μπεμπέκαρος με μουστάκια!» («Yes, son, a great big baby girl complete with a moustache!») The fact that in the approximately, thirty-three years that have passed since then, I have never come across the above form, apart from its record here, goes to show, yet again, that there are

It appears, therefore, that T3 above should be modified as follows:

T3: Nouns with inanimate referents, irrespective of their gender, tend to take feminine augmentative suffixes. Non-neuter nouns with animate referents tend to preserve in augmentation their gender especially in the case of a masculine noun with a male referent or a feminine noun with a female referent. Neuter nouns with animate referents tend to select feminine augmentative suffixes unless their referents are male, in which case they normally select masculine suffixes. The above tendencies yield unmarked augmentative forms whereas their reversal produces marked augmentative forms.

2.2.5. Within each gender there is a variety of D/A suffixes. A number of factors decide, severally or cumulatively, which suffix a noun selects. Firstly, some combinations of *stem + suffix* are considered as euphonic whereas others are not. Thus, *-itsa* and *-úla* contrast, in that the former is selected by nouns in whose stem-final position /l/ appears either as the only consonantal element or as part of a consonant cluster (excluding the clusters /lts/ or /ldz/: see below), e.g. *pasxal + itsa*, *bal + itsa*, *kutal + itsa*, *karekl + itsa*, *volt + itsa*, whereas the latter is selected when the clusters /ts/ or /dz/ appear in stem-final position, e.g. *tarats + úla*, *kalts + úla*, *salts + úla*. *-itsa* is also avoided after stem-final *-i/*, e.g. *istori + úla*, though some words with stem-final *-i/* select *-itsa* and the hiatus *-ii/-* is resolved differently, e.g. *teliá > teliitsa > telitsa* «dot», *platia > platiitsa > plateitsa* «little square» (in contrast to *pláti > platiitsa* «little back»). In all other environments, *-itsa* and *-úla* are interchangeable, but in fact the latter is used more frequently than the former, especially so in the case of feminine nouns in *-i* or *-i(s)*, e.g. *foní > fonúla* or, less often, *fonítsa* «little voice», *áfksisi > afksisúla* «little salary increase»<sup>13</sup>.

Secondly, the considerable number of alternative D/A suffixes and the redundancy in the structure of many of them (see 2.1 above) is the result of the D/A system's adaptation to the effect of two processes, a) the obscurement of the D/A effect of such suffixes through time, and b) the need to make distinctions on the synchronic level concerning the degree of markedness, formality, learnedness, or fossilization of D/A formations. The discussion above also shows that there are additional phonaesthetic and semantic factors for the proliferation of D/A suffixes, i.e. so that unpronounceable or taboo combinations are avoided and so that D/A forms are kept semantically distinct from other lexemes with which they might have the same phonological shape if a particular suffix were employed. Such problems are sometimes resolved not through the employment of alternative suffixes but through, the use of allostems with epenthetic consonants or syllables, e.g. *práym + a > praymat + áki* «little thing», *kafés > kafež + áki* «little coffee», *rolói > roloy + áki* «little watch», *avγó > avγul + áki* «little egg».<sup>14</sup> Chance preferences or fads, related to the formation of pet names and surnames, and changing through time are relevant here, cf. *Δημητράκης* «little Dimitri»/ surname *Δημητράκος* as opposed to *Σπυράκος* «little Spy-

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mechanisms readily available in the language for everyday use for the creation of ad hoc, unexpected, or incongruous forms. For more hints on the matter, see this article, *passim*, as well as Daltas 1979, *passim*, and especially 409-13 and 524-8.

13. For the above paragraph I have drawn from Μπαμπινιώτης 1970, pp. 220-4.

14. See Mackridge 1985, p. 159.

ro» / surname Σπυράκης and to current pet name Μιμάκος «little Mimis» / surname or older pet name Μιμίκος.

2.2.6. We have hinted above, *passim*, that D/A forms do not become fossilised overnight but may move towards fossilization at varying speeds. Relevant to the process of fossilization are the two functions of D/A forms, the one emotive having to do with how the speaker feels about the referent of the D/A form, the addressee or the situation as a whole, and the other referential having to do with the size, small or large (and in the case of A forms, with the efficiency), of the referent. In an attempt to understand how fossilization affects D/A forms, we will suggest that the two functions mentioned above can take two values, minus (-) (function switched off, so to speak) and plus (+) (function switched on). Furthermore, we will see the plus value as varying along a continuum from an unmarked (u) to a marked (m) end. Now, diminutives proper take the values {m emotive} and either {u referential} or {m referential}, e.g.

{m emot, u ref}

*Janis*: Τασάκι, τι κάνεις; «Tasia, dear, how are you?»

*Dimitris*: Νάνσου μου, νελάκι θέλω! «My Nancy, I want water»

{m emot, m ref}

*Tasia*: Έτσι κάνουν τα δικά σας τα σκυλάκια τα μικρά; «Is that how they do (=how) your own little doggies?»

*Nancy*: Πρόσεχε να μην καείς, Νανάκι! Νάνα! Τι 'ναι, γλυκιά μου; Άχου κοριτσάκι μου! «Careful you don't burn yourself, Nanáki! Nána! What is it my sweet? Oh! my little girl!»

The combination {u emot, m ref} characterises forms used as follows:

*Marios*: Μα το Θεό! Να 'ρθούμε μια φορά σ' αυτό το σπίτι και να 'χεις ψωμί! «For goodness sake, can't we ever come to this house and find some bread?»

*Periklis*: Ε, και τι, θα... θα αγοράζω ψωμί για 'να λόχο; Παίρνω ένα καρβελάκι μικρό και περνάω τόσες μέρες. «Eh, what do you expect me to do, buy bread for an army? I buy a little loaf and it's enough for days»

*Janis*: Δεν είμαστε λόχος. «We're not an army»

(notice the emphasis on the small size of the loaf expressed in the mixed D structure (suffixation and periphrasis) both by the D suffix -áki and by the adjective μικρό «little»; notice, too, the defensiveness expressed by the D noun formation).

It is at this point that the process of fossilization sets in on the synchronic level to create new vocabulary items by unmarking the referential function of the D form and by (gradually) increasing the cohesion of the string *stem* + *D suffix*, e.g.

{u emot, u ref}

*Eleni*: Ένα συρτάρι αφιερωμένο σε λάστιχα. «A drawer dedicated to rubber bands»

*Vasilis*: Βγάλε ένα λαστιχάκι! «Get out a rubber band, will you?»

In the above example the cohesion of λαστιχ-άκι «rubber band» is not yet total, hence the alternative use of the non-diminuted λάστιχο meaning (any kind of) rubber (product). In fact, both alternatives are used by more than one participant in *CoM* A. For a considerable number of nouns in -áki, though, the string *stem* + *áki* is cohesive enough to constitute new lexemes which contrast semantically (often in terms of relative «smallness» of their referents) with their prototypes, e.g.

παγάκι «ice cube» < πάγος «ice»,  
 κριθαράκι a) «sty (on eyelid)», b) «grain-shaped pasta» < κριθάρι «barley»,  
 μακαρονάκι «tobe-shaped short pieces of pasta» < μακαρόνι «macaroni»,  
 μανταλάκι «clothes peg» < μάνταλο «latch»,  
 νεραντζάκι «(seville) orange spoon sweet» < νεράντζι «seville orange»,  
 κομπιουτεράκι «pocket calculator» < κομπιούτερ «computer»,  
 ψαθάκι «straw hat» < ψάθα «straw mat»,  
 μηχανάκι «motor bike» < μηχανή «machine»,  
 φασολάκια «green beans» < φασόλια «(dry) beans»,  
 μπαλάκι «ping pong ball» < μπάλα «ball»,  
 χερούλι «door handle» < χέρι «hand»,  
 στρατιωτάκι «toy soldier» < στρατιώτης «soldier»,  
 σακάκι «jacket»/σακίδιο «rucksack»/σακούλα «paper bag»/σακούλι «small bag» < σά-  
 κος «bag»

The suffix -άκι is currently the main D suffix employed in the formation of new words, but, diachronically speaking, is the successor of <sup>3</sup>ί which was itself preceded by <sup>2</sup>ιον in the same function. On the synchronic level the diachronic relation of the three suffixes has the effect that their importance as D suffixes proper is the reverse, i.e. -άκι is an active contributor to non-fossilised D formations, <sup>3</sup>ί far less so and <sup>2</sup>ιον the least. It is such formations, among others, which could be considered as {u/- emot, -ref} e.g.

πόδι «foot» < πους «foot» (older, learned)  
 δαχτυλίδι «ring» < δακτύλιος «ring» (older, learned)

A special case of {-emot, -ref} fossilised diminutives are surnames deriving from the fossilisation of pet names e.g.

Θεοδωράκης < Θεόδωρος «Theodore».

Pet-names themselves could be considered as {m emot, m ref} forms which tend to fossilization to the extent that they replace the corresponding first name of a particular person. In other words if a person is consistently called Δημητράκης by his friends and relatives rather than the original Δημήτρης the former name tends to fossilization.

### 3. The D/A system and the context of situation

Having looked, in the previous section, at the more linguistic side of the variable nature of the D/A system we will now turn to some elements of the context of situation which we set forth in Section 1 above and attempt to show how they correlate with linguistic production.

3.1. In the table that follows (Table 2) the participants in the three conversations have been arranged with respect to the frequency of occurrence of D/A forms in their speech. For each participant, the following information is given: firstly, the number of nouns used in his or her speech expressed as an integer and as a percentage of the total number of nouns used in the conversation in which he or she participates; secondly, the number of D/A forms appearing in his speech expressed as an integer and as a percentage of the number of nouns used in his or her speech (it will be noticed that the ordering of the

participants from top to bottom is based in fact on the percentages of this latter column); thirdly, the capitals A, B or C indicate the conversation of each participant (see 1 above) and they appear in a different column each so that the distribution of the participants of each conversation along the frequency column of D/A forms becomes immediately obvious; for the same reason the average D/A frequency for each conversation as well as the total average for the three conversations have also been incorporated. In the table have been included one D adjective, μικρούτσικη «teeny-weeny», and five tokens of the adverb λιγάκι «a little bit». *Nana*, the toddler, has been excluded as she has produced only three nouns, none of which is a D/A form.

TABLE 2: Participants in order of frequency of D/A forms appearing in their speech.

| PARTICIPANTS                | NOUNS       | D/A FORMS  | CONVERSATION |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| <i>Mr P</i>                 | 2 (0.19)    | 2 (100.0)  | B            |
| <i>Sula</i>                 | 19 (1.27)   | 4 (21.0)   | A            |
| <i>Dolly</i>                | 184 (18.14) | 31 (16.8)  | B            |
| <i>Mrs Anna</i>             | 20 (1.97)   | 3 (15.0)   | B            |
| <i>Nancy</i>                | 382 (37.67) | 56 (14.6)  | B            |
| <i>Mary</i>                 | 14 (1.38)   | 2 (14.2)   | B            |
| <i>Rubi</i>                 | 298 (20.02) | 41 (13.7)  | A            |
| <i>Eleni</i>                | 568 (38.17) | 76 (13.3)  | A            |
| <i>Vangelis</i>             | 30 (2.95)   | 4 (13.3)   | B            |
| <b>Conv. B</b>              | 1014        | 125 (12.3) | B            |
| <i>Periklis<sub>2</sub></i> | 41 (4.04)   | 5 (12.1)   | B            |
| <b>Conv. A</b>              | 1488        | 176 (11.8) | A            |
| <i>Total</i>                | 3189        | 335 (10.5) |              |
| <i>Periklis<sub>1</sub></i> | 260 (17.47) | 27 (10.3)  | A            |
| <i>Sokratis</i>             | 120 (11.83) | 10 (8.3)   | B            |
| <i>Vasilis</i>              | 341 (22.91) | 28 (8.2)   | A            |
| <i>Mimis</i>                | 32 (3.15)   | 2 (6.2)    | B            |
| <i>Tasia</i>                | 35 (5.09)   | 2 (5.7)    | C            |
| <i>Sotiris</i>              | 186 (18.34) | 10 (5.3)   | B            |
| <i>Janis</i>                | 253 (36.82) | 13 (5.1)   | C            |
| <i>Marios</i>               | 175 (25.47) | 9 (5.1)    | C            |
| <b>Conv. C</b>              | 687         | 34 (4.9)   | C            |
| <i>Periklis<sub>3</sub></i> | 224 (32.60) | 10 (4.4)   | C            |

Table 2 above seemso bear out the impressionistic description of the linguistically relevant characteristics of the three conversations in 1.3. above. Indeed, *Conv. C* has the lowest D/A percentage and the narrowest distribution along the D/A column: in fact, it squeezes right at the bottom of the D/A column with only a slight overlap with *Conv. B*, presumably, as we argued in 1.3.3. above, because of the more formal character of many of the topics discussed and the fact that the participants were not having a proper meal at the time as they were tired and had to have an early start the following day (not that that stopped them from producing interesting D/A forms). The most widely distributed

conversation, which also has the highest D/A percentage, is *Conv. B*, probably because of the wide difference, in terms of formality, between the topics discussed among adults and those (very informal ones) «discussed» between adults and children; also, because the speakers participate differently in these two types of topic (see 1.3.2. above and 3.3. below). Finally, *Conv. C* has a lower D/A percentage and is less widely distributed than *Conv. B*, probably because, as we claimed in 1.3.3. above, though more uniformly informal it is still less informal than informal sections of *Conv. B*.

The above regularities can be seen more clearly if we remove from the arrangement of Table 2 the distorting effect of those speakers whose contribution of nouns does not exceed 2.5 per cent of the total number of nouns in their conversations. The revised list appears as Table 3 below in which only the percentage of D/A forms in relation to the number of nouns used is included for each participant plus an indication of his or her conversation.

TABLE 3: Participants with noun contribution > 2.5% in order of frequency of D/A forms in their speech.

| PARTICIPANTS                | D/A FORMS | CONVERSATION |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| <i>Dolly</i>                | 16.8      | B            |
| <i>Nancy</i>                | 14.6      | B            |
| <i>Rubi</i>                 | 13.7      | A            |
| <i>Eleni</i>                | 13.3      | A            |
| <i>Vangelis</i>             | 13.3      | A            |
| <i>Conv. B</i>              | 12.3      | B            |
| <i>Periklis<sub>2</sub></i> | 12.1      | B            |
| <i>Conv. A</i>              | 11.8      | A            |
| <i>Total</i>                | 10.5      |              |
| <i>Periklis<sub>1</sub></i> | 10.3      | A            |
| <i>Sokratis</i>             | 8.3       | B            |
| <i>Vasilis</i>              | 8.2       | A            |
| <i>Mimis</i>                | 6.2       | B            |
| <i>Tasia</i>                | 5.7       | C            |
| <i>Sotiris</i>              | 5.3       | B            |
| <i>Janis</i>                | 5.1       | C            |
| <i>Marios</i>               | 5.1       | C            |
| <i>Conv. C</i>              | 4.9       | C            |
| <i>Periklis<sub>3</sub></i> | 4.4       | C            |

Apart from the greater regularity in distribution of the three conversations along the D/A column emerging from Table 3, a remarkable fact can also be observed: the D/A percentage that *Periklis*, the only speaker who participates in all three conversations, has achieved in each conversation closely follows the average D/A percentage in each conversation. It appears, therefore, that, notwithstanding individual differences in the utilisation of a variable tendency such as that producing D/A forms, the degree of formality of a particular situation affects the linguistic production of all the participants with amazing

regularity: the greater the formality of the situation, the fewer the D/A forms implemented, and the less the formality the more D/A forms are used.

3.2. An even greater regularity in the relative distribution of the participants of the three conversations along the D/A column can be achieved if we take into consideration only the D/A forms proper and ignore the forms which are subject to fossilization (see 2 above). The relevant percentages appear in Table 4 below. Notice that here *Periklis* is slightly higher scores than the averages of *Conv. B* and *Conv. C* but much higher than the average of *Conv. A* as a whole. The explanation might lie in the fact that *Periklis*, being considerably older than the rest of the participants in *Conv. A* interprets the situation as more informal than the younger participants allow themselves to in his presence and in his house. In contrast *Periklis* is the same age as the other core participants in *Conv. B* and *Conv. C* and therefore his interpretation of the degree of formality of the situation is not at variance with the average interpretation. It should also be added at this point that the overproduction of diminutives proper in a situation may be frowned upon by some purists. Thus the column of «Berlina» in the newspaper *Kathimerini*, sarcastically comments from time to time on usage of the type: Θα πάρετε ονισκάκι; «Will you have some (dear) whisky?» Θέλετε κρεμίτσα ή γαλατάκι στον καφέ σας; «Do you take (dear) cream or (dear) milk in your coffee?» Πόση ζαχαρίτσα; «How much (dear) sugar?»

TABLE 4: Speakers in order of frequency of non-fossilised D/A forms in their speech.

|                             |      |   |
|-----------------------------|------|---|
| <i>Vangelis</i>             | 13.3 | B |
| <i>Nancy</i>                | 12.3 | B |
| <i>Dolly</i>                | 11.9 | B |
| <i>Periklis<sub>2</sub></i> | 9.7  | B |
| <b>Conv. B</b>              | 9.1  | B |
| <i>Mimis</i>                | 6.2  | B |
| <i>Sokratis</i>             | 5.8  | B |
| <i>Tasia</i>                | 5.7  | C |
| <i>Periklis<sub>1</sub></i> | 5.0  | A |
| <i>Total</i>                | 4.6  |   |
| <i>Eleni</i>                | 3.5  | A |
| <b>Conv. A</b>              | 2.9  | A |
| <i>Rubi</i>                 | 2.4  | A |
| <i>Vasilis</i>              | 2.0  | A |
| <i>Periklis<sub>3</sub></i> | 1.7  | C |
| <b>Conv. C</b>              | 1.6  | C |
| <i>Janis</i>                | 1.5  | C |
| <i>Marios</i>               | 0.5  | C |

As Table 4 above shows, with the exception of *Tasia*, whose low production (35 nouns, 2 D forms) can account for the irregularity, the three conversations are neatly ordered along the D/A column without overlapping. It appears, therefore, that functional, i.e. non fossilised, D/A forms obey the constraints applying on D/A production more strictly than forms subjected to the process of fossilization. However, in spite of the (relative but

by no means critical) obscurement of the relevant regularities brought about by the inclusion of (semi) -fossilised forms in our calculations we have based our analysis on the totality of D/A forms because, as we showed in 2.2.6. above, fossilization is a matter of degree, subject to diachronic change and synchronic (stylistic) variation.

3.3. It will be interesting to see now if the linguistic production of the participants in the three conversations is differentiated according to sex. In Table 5 below the percentages reached by each sex appear for each of the three conversations. In the fractions that accompany the percentages the number of D/A forms appears over the number of nouns.

TABLE 5: D/A production according to the sex of the participants in the three conversations.

| CONVERSATION   | SEX                          |                               |
|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                | MALE                         | FEMALE                        |
| <i>Conv. B</i> | $\frac{31}{409}$<br>(7.57)   | $\frac{87}{566}$<br>(15.37)   |
| <i>Conv. A</i> | $\frac{55}{601}$<br>(9.15)   | $\frac{117}{866}$<br>(13.51)  |
| <i>Conv. C</i> | $\frac{32}{652}$<br>(4.90)   | $\frac{2}{35}$<br>(5.71)      |
| TOTAL          | $\frac{118}{1662}$<br>(7.09) | $\frac{206}{1467}$<br>(14.04) |

It is obvious from the above table that females consistently use more D/A forms than males (on average, approximately twice as many). Whereas, however, female averages in the three conversations are ordered in exactly the same way as conversation averages, irrespective of sex, are, i.e.

*Conv B > Conv A > Conv C*

*Females B > Females A > Females C*

the order of the male averages is reversed for *Conv A* and *Conv B*:

*Males A > Males B > Males C*

The explanation of the above phenomenon lies, perhaps, in the different participation of the two sexes in the topics discussed in *Conv B*: the males are in charge of most of the «serious» discussion, whereas it is the females that do most of the talking to the children. In fact, the effect on the speech of the females of having little children as addressees is so powerful that it compensates for the low D/A percentage of the males; so much so that CONV. B as a whole achieves the highest percentage of D/A production. In other words



Table 4 above reveals the fact that sex correlates neatly with the production of D/A suffixes in that females produce more such suffixes than males in all three conversations. It also corroborates what we have already noticed in the discussion above, namely, that the topic of conversation ([- learned] if little children are addressed, and tending more to the [+ learned] end of the «learnedness» continuum if adults talk to each other) variably correlates with the appearance of D/A suffixes in that [- learned] topics enhance their production whereas [+ learned] topics obstruct it.

3.4. Richer data would probably reveal further differentiation of D/A production according to such factors as education, profession or age. Due to the paucity of our data (which, however, is rich in naturalness, as we argued in 1.2. above) we will have to refrain from trying to establish relations between D/A suffix production and additional features of the context of situation in order to avoid the risk of coming up with distorted findings. Nevertheless, the point has been made, I hope, that the interaction between linguistic and situational variation is far from extraordinary and therefore deserves the attention of the linguist on a routine, rather than a programmatic, basis.

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